

A TRIP TO THE MASAI STEPPES

A Journey into the Land of Black Savages.

By C. NOLTE.

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SYNOPSIS.

In 1895 the author, an officer in the German army, was directed to proceed to Zanzibar and organize an expedition and go to that portion of German East Africa known as the Masai Steppes, for the purpose of establishing a station and exploring the country, with a view to its resources for white settlement. The party went in there, passed Kilimanjaro, and located on the Masai Steppes south of the Meru Mountains.

The Wandorobos brought several zebras about eight to ten days old—slightly little fellows that could hardly stand on their legs yet. I gave them some cow's milk, but that did not seem to agree with them, and I tried condensed milk mixed with hot starch-water. From the first three foals that were brought to our camp only one survived. I called him Somali, and he was the favorite with every one at the station; in fact, he could do what he liked without punishment, and he made the most of his position.

He got milk three times a day only, after he had become old enough to eat grass. He knew exactly the time when he was to be milked, and a few minutes before that time he would return from the pasture, and come to my tent, where he always got his milk. We often tried to push him away from the field, but he would resist with all his power; nothing could move him before he had his bottle.

Later, he, with others, proved a perfect nuisance at the station; there was no place that we could call our own; they came into our tents, into the mess-room while we were eating—in short, everywhere.

COLLECTING NATIVE ANIMALS.

There was scarcely a day on which the Wandorobos did not bring some young animal, and I soon had a very fine menagerie, consisting of a number of young gazelles, antelopes, zebras, wild hogs, ostriches, monkeys, etc.

One of the members of our expedition, who had been in the direction of the lakes, brought three parrots home with him. These proved a source of great amusement to us. They attended the drill of the soldiers, and picked up the commands very quickly. It was very funny to hear them shout "Order arms!" "Present arms!" etc.

We were not long in our new station before Christmas came round. All the members of the expedition had returned, and we made up our minds to celebrate

properly, and let our men also know that this was a time of rejoicing. What troubled us most was where to get a Christmas tree, as there are no fir trees growing in that part of Africa. Early on the morning of the 24th we all went out—two of the party to shoot game for the camp, another to secure fish, while I went in search of a suitable Christmas tree, and also to bring in some woodcock, wild pigeon, and guinea fowls.

After a long tramp I found a likely-looking small thorn-tree, which I ordered felled and taken to camp. Sport proved pretty good that day, and I came home with a fine selection of birds; my comrades also had been lucky, and we were able to prepare such a feast that the table fairly gleamed under its weight.

CHRISTMAS IN INTERIOR AFRICA.
The trouble was to fix up our Christmas trees, but we were all of inventive minds, and the difficulty was soon arranged. We stuck the tree firmly in a barrel of earth, as decorations we used large and small glass beads, paper tassels, and candles, which we had cut in halves and pared down and fixed to the boughs with thin wire.

Every one at the station was to get some presents, and to be quite fair we attached numbers to the presents and let the people

and such like things that delight the heart of the African. I allowed the people to have a dance that night, and I provided them with plenty of meat, bananas, and native beer. At 11 o'clock we had a fireworks display, which greatly astonished the Wandorobos, who became very frightened at the rockets, some even running away, as they thought the fireballs in their descent would annihilate them.

After dinner we brewed a nice bowl of punch, and sat far into the night spinning yarns and listening to the frolics of our natives; for that one night they could do as they pleased; discipline was relaxed, and beyond the guard of eight men, no one was on duty.

There were a great number of roaring fires about the camp, around which could be seen the dusky forms of the natives, some dancing to the monotonous sound of the African native drum, which is played with the knuckles, some singing, some telling tales to which the others listened in rapt attention, and the whole forming a most picturesque scene, the full moon shining on it and lending it additional charm.

In the distance we could see the snow on the top of the Kilimanjaro, so that in the warm tropical night, which was so little in contrast with Christmas, we were reminded of our Northern homes, where at that time the ground was covered with snow. The only drawback in the celebration was the number of mistakes, which kept on stinging us all night. Next day—Christmas day proper—we had some athletic sports for the men, when we gave them prizes for running and jumping.

A SEVERE LOSS.
That night we suffered a rather severe loss. I had brought three large ostriches with me, which had been a present to me from a comrade who went back to Europe. The birds—one cock and two hens—seemed to thrive very well, and I was think-

ing to see clearly, I could not ascertain, but certain it is that a wildcat worked her way through the bottom of the grass hut and attacked the ostriches.

These wildcats are smaller than the leopard, but similarly spotted; they are very slender and agile, and where their head passes through they manage to get their whole body through. They are most destructive, as they do not like other wild beasts, and will down an animal and tear it up, but they fly at the throat of an animal, suck the blood, and strike another animal in the same way.

When I was sleeping peacefully, when I was awakened by the guard about 2 o'clock in the morning. He told me that there was a great struggle going on in the ostrich stable. I jumped up and hastily snatched up my revolver, telling the man to get the lantern from the guard-room.

In the meantime, some of the soldiers, who had been alarmed by the guard, had turned out with their guns, and we all quickly proceeded to the stable. I suspected at once that some wild beast had got in, and told the soldiers to level their guns and be ready to fire at anything that might rush against us, as soon as I gave the word. I was ready with my revolver.

When I arrived at the stable, I had the door, which was composed of wooden boards and held in place by a large stone, quickly removed, and holding up a lantern high with one hand I beheld a sickening sight. Before me lay the three fine ostriches, each with the throat bitten through at the base of the neck, and the blood was still oozing from the wounds.

The hens were quite dead, but the cock was still striking out with the legs in the last death throes. There was no sign of the wildcat, only next morning we found her tracks and a small hole where she had worked her way through into the hut.

This was a severe blow to me, as the birds had shown signs that they would breed soon, and I had hoped to raise a small family of ostriches from them. Now all I had left were three small chicks, and these little fellows gave me a lot of trouble, as I had to keep them over night in an old packing case in my tent. This case was lined with grass and flannel and covered with an old blanket. Every now and then in the night one of the chicks would try to tumble out of the box, and when they got taller, they sometimes succeeded in that trick, too, before I woke up. The guard would then have to run after the fugitive, and after an exciting chase bring him back.

This was of course not very conducive to a quiet night's rest, and as soon as possible I had a little stone house built for them, from which they could not escape, and where they would be safe from wild beasts. At that time some other troubles occurred, too, which easily might have led to serious consequences. There had always been a bad feeling between the Masais whom I had brought from the coast and the Somali soldiers; the Somalis considering themselves far superior to the Masais.

It was the duty of the chief Somali—the Color Sergeant—to each day distribute the food to all hands at noon. The rations consisted of meat (if there was any), either fresh or dried, beans, bananas, banana meal, corn, or cornmeal, etc.; in fact, whatever there was to be had at the time.

The chief of the Masais, whose name was Zendeo, would receive the rations for all his people (there had been some additions to the original number, both men and women, and we had erected a station and sent them out to them). The Sergeant was very fond of cutting these rations down to the very narrowest possible limit, and as Zendeo was less vigilant than the night before, the consequence was that there were continual bickerings between these two. Zendeo had complained to me several times about shortage, and I had to see that the matter was righted. I had several times cautioned the Sergeant, but although he was strictly obedient in all other matters and a thoroughly good and trustworthy soldier, he would always break through in this matter.

THE MASAI REBEL.
One day, just between Christmas and New Year, the matter came to a crisis. I happened to be alone that day, as the members of the expedition were attending to duties outside of the camp. One was burning lime, with a party of the carriers, and the other was cutting another surveying, while the third was picking out large trees to be felled. I was having my

lunch in the middle of the day, about five minutes before the bugle had sounded, calling all hands to the distribution of rations, when all at once the soldier on duty came rushing in shouting: "Banana kuba ususi, Zendeo na pia Chamaama." (Sir, come quick; Zendeo is beating Chamaama, Chamaama was the name of the Somali Color Sergeant.)

I rushed out, grasping my stick, when, just on rounding the corner of the barracks, I received one of the small kirias (a short stick with a thick knob on one end, which was thrown with great force, and evidently intended for the Somali Sergeant, who stood just alongside of me. I saw the stars dancing before my eyes, and as I only wore a soft cap, I had the full benefit of the blow and fell down under it, but I was only down for a minute. The next moment I was up again, and none too soon to avert serious consequences.

The Masais had come that day in force, and had evidently been prepared for the row as they had all brought their spears and swords, while the whole force of the soldiers that were in barracks then had run out with guns, and some with fixed bayonets, their fierce Arab faces showing in their features a strong determination to draw blood that day.

Luckily the men were well disciplined, and accustomed to obey orders at once without questioning them. So I quickly shouted the word: "Fall in, order arms!" while I drove back the foremost Masais with a few blows of the stick. I next commanded the men to load, and then having loaded the Masais, I ordered them to load down their arms. They looked sullen and did not move, so I stepped forward to Zendeo and told him that if he and his men had not obeyed my command, the timing I had counted three I would have the soldiers shoot them down. They knew that I always did what I said, so they thought it better to give in, and before I counted two, which I did very slowly, to give them time, they had all put down their arms.

I then had the spears and swords gathered up and taken to the store, where they were locked up. I ordered the Masais to their quarters, and forbade them to leave their huts again that day; then when they had gone I gave my soldiers orders to keep the huts under guard, and for punishment made them drill till dusk without rations. That settled that little rebellion for some time, but I fear to tell you what happened next. I had been absent that day. The Masais would surely have got help from the Wandorobos, and our whole expedition could have been easily annihilated. Things like that have happened before in Africa.

The Masais are very treacherous people, and I was always on my guard against them. One of them, however, did us a good service during war-time, but of this later on. (To be continued.)

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IDOL GOES DEVIL HUNTING.

A Curious Ceremony Practiced to Heal a Sick Woman in China.

All of us believe more or less in the devil and did he comes to torment mankind, and we try our best to upset his plans or dispose of him in some way; but all our efforts are not so demonstrative as those of the Chinese. Today, says a *Wah Chai*, correspondent of the *New York Sun*, the devil was successfully caught in a fisherman's net and afterward burnt in a pile of straw, and so we here in *Wah Chai*, according to the Chinese theory, are without a devil.

An old woman here has been ill for some time and the priests were called in to decide what was the matter; their decision was that she should be shut up for three days, as the devil was around. They also decided that the devil must be caught and destroyed. So they sent over the river and secured the services of a noted idol, *Li-Lung-shan*, the second dragon king. He reached here safely in the regulation Chinese chair with four bearers, and they began first of all to find out where the medicine was to be used.

This was done by going round and round until they were too dizzy to stand, and the way the idol had pointed the direction in which they were to hunt. They searched half a day. At last, nearing a deep pool of water, the idol took a lurch and away the whole lot went head first into the pool. They came to the conclusion that

the elixir of life was in here, for they walked around that pool for an hour or more and after time fell in. Once they lost the idol for a time in the water. They then put him in a tub, but oh! sad to relate, the idol was too heavy and down went tub, idol and all. After some time they rescued him and brought him to land.

After this they asked the idol for further instructions, and he told them by nods that they must search for the devil. The idol added that he was in the pond. So they got a big broom and swept him out and he ran for a graveyard nearby. They soon located him on top of a grave and then they drove pitchforks into the ground and poured a circle of lime around. Then a fisherman's net was spread out over the grave and the net was rolled up with the forks, and Mr. Devil was safely tied up inside.

He was let off in triumph to a neighboring field which the idol had pointed out and in which there was a strawstack. This they quickly ignited and threw the net, devil and all in, and with great shoutings and burstings of firecrackers he went up in smoke.

While they were lighting the devil three foreigners went down to where they were and asked them why they went first this way and then that way, and even plunged into the water while carrying the idol. The Chinamen said the idol controlled them. Foreigners laughed at them, and the devil-hunters said: "You try and see." We did so, but our hands wanted to help. We let him, but so on discovered that he kept swaying his body and thus compelled us to move.

We called a Christian Chinaman to take his place and after that in spite of all the beating of gongs and ringing of bells the idol never moved. The bearers then began to talk to the idol again and we told them he had ears but could not hear, etc. As we did so one of them came to us and said: "Say, don't preach that way; this is the way we make our living. We know to be false, but these people don't, so let us alone, as we want to make money." Thus every day a poor Chinaman is deluded by some one sharper than himself.

The next day another devil put in his appearance in another village, and a noted idol was again used. While the people were feasting and worshipping the idol, the devil would be fun to fire off the firecrackers, and he did so. As they were near the house which was decorated up with paper, the house caught fire, and before it could be burned four families were homeless, the idol stopped and another devil got up in smoke.

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